

REVISED BY

DATE 8/18/81

RDS or YDS EXT. DATE

REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐

DECLASSIFIED/RELEASABLE

RELEASE DATED

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

QUESTION: Have you anything to tell us about the Black Hebrews in Israel now living in Israel?

ANSWER: We understand there about 1400 Black Hebrews in Israel at the present time. The majority of them are American citizens. Through our Embassy in Israel, the USG provides the normal services for those Black Hebrews who are American citizens, and the Embassy periodically visits the group.

QUESTION: What is the legal status of the Black Hebrews in Israel?

ANSWER: The legal status of the Black Hebrews in Israel has been uncertain, since they did not arrive in Israel with visas which authorize them to live in Israel permanently. The question of their future status in Israel is of course a matter for the GOI to decide.

QUESTION: Is the GOI giving them any assistance?

ANSWER: Because of the uncertainty of the Black Hebrews' community status in Israel, regular social services which Israel provides its citizens were not originally available to them. Recently efforts have been made to include them in some of the nation's health and social services. While public education is available to them, they have chosen to arrange their own education within the Black Hebrew community.

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QUESTION: Do you see parallels between the Black Hebrews in Israel and the Peoples Temple in Guyana?

ANSWER: I do not think it would be useful or accurate to draw parallels. I would point out that the relationship of the Black Hebrew community to its surrounding society is quite different. The largest Black Hebrew community is in the midst of the town of Dimona, where members live in the same apartment buildings with Israelis. Furthermore, many of the Black Hebrews work outside their own community and are thus exposed to Israelis, as Israelis are to them. And of course, local Israeli officials maintain contact with them.

QUESTION: I understand the Government Accounting Office is coming to visit Israel, to look into the status of the Black Hebrews?

ANSWER: The GAO is planning to conduct a study of consular services provided to American citizens by our Embassies in a number of countries in the Middle East and South Asia. I am not aware that their visit to Israel is specifically in connection with the Black Hebrews. I understand they will examine overall consular services to Americans while they are there.

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